



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick
Press Release**

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GOVERNOR PATRICK PROCLAIMS HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

BOSTON – Thursday, September 18, 2014 – Governor Deval Patrick has proclaimed September 15, 2014 to October 15, 2014 as the 26th annual Hispanic Heritage Month in Massachusetts. Throughout the month, the Governor, joined by leaders from the Patrick Administration, will be participating in events that highlight the social and civic contributions and rich heritage of Massachusetts' Hispanic community. This year's theme, *Civic Reflection "Promoting Diversity in Leadership"* will recognize the impact of the Hispanic community's leadership and service to the Commonwealth.

"Since my Administration first took office, the Commonwealth has emerged as a leader in creating access and opportunities for people of color," said Governor Patrick. "We still have work to do. Membership in a community is about understanding the stake that each of us has, not just in our own dreams and struggles but in our neighbors' as well. If we keep that sense of community alive, if we make it an integral part of the work we are doing in and between government and our citizens, I'm confident our best days are ahead."

Governor Patrick will present the official Hispanic Heritage Month proclamation at an event at the State House on Wednesday, October 1. The Governor will be joined by David Morales, former Commissioner of healthcare policy and finance at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and now Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer at Steward Health Care; Joel Barrera, Deputy Director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Jaenyffe I. Santos, a student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and previous Intern at the Governor's Western Massachusetts Office. Prior to the remarks, there will be a display of Hispanic artists and musical expression, and an opportunity for networking to continue the advancement and collaboration in leadership roles.

"Governor Patrick has been a staunch ally of Hispanics in Massachusetts, and this event highlights our community and its contributions to the Commonwealth," said Barrera, who is also founder and executive director of the Commonwealth Seminar, whose mission is to open the doors of state government to underrepresented groups.

Under Governor Patrick's leadership, over one quarter of executive branch employees are people of color and over half are women. His advocacy has encouraged diverse and Hispanic leadership at all levels.

During his first month in office, Governor Patrick signed Executive Order 478 which reestablished the Commonwealth's commitment to hiring a diverse workforce by promoting inclusion in hiring and board appointments, and providing enhanced access to state services and contracts for all Massachusetts residents. That executive order also outlined a specific process to implement the hiring of people with disabilities, resulting in the creation of the Disability Task Force to establish and implement best practices for recruiting, hiring and promoting persons with disabilities.

"Governor Patrick has taken advantage of Massachusetts's full potential for diversity, and shown it to the world. Thanks to his appointments across his administration and on the many boards and commissions, Massachusetts has seen unprecedented levels of diversity in leadership roles," said Georgianna Melendez, Executive Director of Commonwealth Compact. "A few key examples are the appointment of Diana Maldonado to be the first Hispanic justice of the Massachusetts Appeals Court, Hon. Angela M. Ordoñez as chief justice of the Probate and Family Court, and Marcel Quiroga to the Salem State University Board of Trustees."

Governor Patrick's proclamation recognizes that the nations of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Chile, which all celebrate their independence between September 15 and September 18. According to the United States Library of Congress, National Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity for Americans to celebrate, "the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America." First recognized as a week-long observation under President Lyndon B. Johnson, President Ronald Reagan later expanded the holiday from September 15 through October 15.

For further information on Hispanic Heritage Month in the Commonwealth, or Hispanic Heritage Month events hosted by the Patrick Administration, please contact the Governor's Western Massachusetts Office in Springfield at 413-784-1200.

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